

As the result of his careful examinations of inflamed spinal cords, the author sums up the following :

1. *Acute interstitial myelitis*, with swelling of the fibres, nuclei, and cells of the neuroglia, with destruction of the nerve fibres and nerve cells, leading to softening.

2. *Acute parenchymatous myelitis*, where the nerve fibres in the white substance are primarily or chiefly affected, myeline and axis cylinders both disappearing, but the interstitial tissue remaining, seemingly not much changed ; also cases in which the nerve cells are chiefly affected, especially those of the anterior cornua, the nuclei and cells of the neuroglia being almost entirely exempt from change, as in infantile paralysis and allied affections.

3. *Chronic interstitial myelitis*, affecting the neuroglia, fibres, nuclei, and cells in both white and gray substance, the nerve fibres and cells being affected only secondarily, as in sclerosis.

4. *Chronic parenchymatous myelitis*, in the white columns only, locomotor ataxia, or lesion of the posterior columns (and secondary ascending and descending degeneration, possibly), is as yet well known ; lateral sclerosis probably belongs to this variety. In the gray substance the cells are affected as in progressive muscular atrophy. This subdivision of myelitis, taken from the nomenclature of interstitial and parenchymatous nephritis, seems to be well worthy of attention.

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**Contributions to Physiology.** By ISAAC OTT, M.D. Part V. Easton, Pa., 1883.

This small volume contains not less than seven original articles, whose titles are as follows : 1. Rattlesnake Venom ; 2. Copperhead Venom ; 3. Vibration of Rattlesnake's Tail ; 4. Vaso-motor, Sudorific, and Sensory Fibres in the Spinal Cord ; 5. Physiological Action of Astragalus Moll. ; 6. Action of Drugs on Plant Growth ; 7. Physiological Action of Convallaria Majalis. Every article gives in a short, spicy way some physiological fact worthy of notice. Most of the articles have previously appeared in this JOURNAL.

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1. **The Systematic Treatment of Nerve Prostration and Hysteria.** By W. S. PLAYFAIR, M.D. Pp. 111. Philadelphia : Henry C. Lea's Sons, 1883.

2. **Fat and Blood. An Essay on the Treatment of Certain Forms of Neurasthenia and Hysteria.** By S. Wier Mitchell, M.D. Pp. 162. Third edition. Revised with additions.

Since the publication of the first edition of Dr. Mitchell's work in 1877, his treatment of certain resistant and perplexing cases with rest and excessive feeding, together with isolation, electricity, and massage, has become widely known, and either in its entirety or with some modification has been extensively practised. It has been set forth in a translation in French, and has in England found an earnest advocate and upholder in Dr. Playfair, the title of whose pamphlet has been given above. It consists of two articles published in the *Lancet* several years ago, and an address upon the subject delivered before the Medical Section of the British Medical Association at Worcester, August 9, 1882. He indicates Dr. Mitchell's claims for originality in this systematic treatment of nerve prostration and hysteria, and cites a number of cases in his own practice of wonderful cure thereby.

Dr. Mitchell's revised edition gives additional hints to the carrying out of his treatment, answers some adverse criticisms, devotes some space to the treatment of obesity, the use of milk as a diet and its effect on excretions.

It seems strange that Dr. Mitchell should find it necessary to defend his views from adverse criticism. If his method of treatment rescued but one poor creature from the chains of hopeless invalidism it would be worthy of high commendation ; but coming as it does to a class of cases which taxes the ingenuity and patience of the physician to the uttermost, it will be welcomed, as it has been in the past, as one of the measures to try when ordinary methods fail.

GRACE PECKHAM.

**Recherches Cliniques et Thérapeutiques sur l'Épilepsie, l'Hystérie, et l'Idiotie.** By Drs. BOURNEVILLE, E. BONNAIRE, et WUILLAMIÉ. Paris : A. Delahaye et Lecroisner, 1882.

The present volume is a species of report of Dr. Bourneville's service at the Bicêtre. It contains the improvements devised and desired in his service. It appears that a male nurse committed pæderasty with seven of the idiots ; to three of whom he communicated syphilis. The nurse was sent to state prison with hard labor for twelve years, and was to be obliged to remain for ten years under the surveillance of the police after his discharge. It seems curious that a chronic alcoholic, as this nurse was, should have been appointed to such a position. The second part, "Notes and Observations on Idiocy," contains some interestingly reported cases of "tuberous sclerosis," meningo-encephalitis,